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SUBJECT: CODEL REED AND MOI MINISTER ATMAR DISCUSS POLICE REFORM
AND CORRUPTION

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Senators Jack Reed and Edward Kaufman met with Minister of Interior Hanif Atmar on April 18. Acknowledging that the Afghan National Police (ANP) is the weak link in Afghan security forces, Atmar emphasized qualitative improvements made over the past year through training and other reforms. He was especially pleased to discuss creation of his own "Afghan FBI" and the growing effectiveness of his "119" tip hotline. Atmar described the challenges of fighting internal corruption and developing criminal cases for prosecution. Finally, he summarized his efforts to promote diversity within the ANP through high-level appointments and by recruiting women. End summary.

¶2. (U) Minister of Interior Hanif Atmar met with Senators Jack Reed and Edward Kaufman on April 18. Atmar began by noting the 2 successes in the Afghan security infrastructure, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Directorate of Security (NDS). The Afghan National Police, he said, is the weakest link, but part of that he blamed on original design problems and the fact that the ANA took precedence in securing the country and fighting the insurgency. However, training programs have led to a qualitative difference in the ANP now in comparison to a few years ago. Four to six policemen lose their lives each day in defense of the country. Senator Reed noted the importance of the ANP in holding territory gained from the enemy.

¶3. (SBU) Admitting that police should be the ones fighting corruption, Atmar discussed his initiatives to ferret out corruption within the MOI and ANP. He is setting up a merit-based appointment system, requiring personal asset inventories from all of his officers, and establishing what he referred to as an "Afghan FBI" (which we assume to mean his Major Crimes Task Force, set up with assistance from our FBI). Fifty percent of the staff for that unit has already been polygraphed as an anti-corruption measure. The biggest problem, he said, is lack of resources.

¶4. (U) Senator Reed thanked Atmar for setting a good personal example for his staff, and said we want to help on resources. Comparing Afghanistan with the first 2 countries visited on this trip (Iraq and Pakistan), Reed said Afghanistan had made much more progress on security in a very short period of time. Senator Kaufman noted the importance of faith in government and the ill effects of corruption. MOI is a model for others, he said, and to say that progress has been very impressive would be an understatement.

¶5. (U) Atmar told a story about his new MOI tip hotline. He said the first thing he does in the morning is read his "119" report, and that in the past few days there had been 4 reports by the public on the placement of IEDs, all of which were subsequently dismantled by the ANP. These were the first such examples of public cooperation with the police, which Atmar saw as a sign of growing trust. He

planned to send thank you notes to the individuals and do a public affairs piece for television on the hotline.

¶ 16. (U) Discussing crime trends and prosecutions, Atmar told the senators that there were 11,000 crimes reported last year, one-third the number from the previous year. More than 1,000 drug arrests were made last year, 300 of them against major traffickers. However, only one-third of these major cases resulted in convictions. While the judiciary is one part of the problem, Atmar acknowledged the need to professionalize the ANP through such measures as training on evidence collection.

¶ 17. (SBU) Finally, Atmar talked about diversity within the ANP. He said he already had 3 Deputy Ministers from 3 different ethnic groups, and was hoping to fill the fourth slot from a fourth group. His challenge is to balance merit with ethnic diversity. But he said he is most concerned about bringing women into the police, with just 600 currently on board. One idea he is mulling over is to offer higher salaries for women.

¶ 18. (U) CODEL Reed was not able to clear on this message before departure.

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